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*President*: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Agenda item 45** (*continued*)

**Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/348)**

**Mrs. Gittens-Joseph** (Trinidad and Tobago): In March 1995, over 100 Heads of State or Government attended the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen, affirming the importance of this issue as an item of the highest priority on the international agenda and their determination to deal decisively with the challenge of achieving social progress for all. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action represents a comprehensive blueprint to secure this goal.

This decision to devote plenary meetings to this agenda item at both the fiftieth and the fifty-first sessions of the General Assembly is indicative of the general desire to maintain the momentum produced by the landmark Copenhagen conference and to translate the commitments made into concrete action. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/51/348) provides useful information in assessing the follow-up to the Summit.

Last December, the General Assembly, in resolution 50/161, reaffirmed the critical importance of national action and international cooperation for social development. The Assembly stressed the need to invest in people and their well-being in order to achieve the objectives of social development. It reiterated the call on Governments to define time-bound goals and targets for reducing poverty and eradicating absolute poverty, expanding employment and reducing unemployment and enhancing social integration within each national context.

The World Bank estimates that about 1.5 billion people live in absolute poverty today, most of them in developing countries, and that the number is increasing by approximately 25 million a year. Poverty has been brought into greater focus this year as it is the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. The struggle against poverty is a struggle for human dignity. The situation of a people driven by misery and desperation provokes social instability and threatens peace and security.

It has been recognized that the struggle against poverty and for the promotion of social development need to be pursued jointly by developed and developing countries, and that it is mutually beneficial to both. In this respect, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Governments of Norway and the Netherlands for the meeting held at Oslo last April to review the implementation of the 20/20 initiative, which was enunciated in the Copenhagen Programme of Action, and which aims to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of basic social services to the poor and vulnerable in the developing world through a partnership between developed and developing countries.

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The mobilization of financial resources is critical in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, and the Oslo consensus on the 20/20 initiative is important. In this regard, there needs to be a sustained and active effort to generate funds and provide financial assistance, which are essential if we are to realize the commitments made at Copenhagen.

My delegation welcomes the actions taken so far by the United Nations as a follow-up to the Summit. The Commission for Social Development, which has primary responsibility for the follow-up to the Summit, decided at its special session in May that its work programme for the years 1997 to 2000 will be geared towards implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on a thematic basis. Consideration of the special theme of poverty at the May meeting was timely, and the measures proposed for its eradication would be useful for follow-up work at the national and international levels. The increase in membership of the Commission and the decision that at future sessions panels of experts will participate in addressing critical areas of concern will greatly assist the Commission in fulfilling its mandate.

The Economic and Social Council held a fruitful session in July to look at coordination of the activities of the United Nations system for the eradication of poverty. The decision by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to establish inter-agency task forces will enhance the coordination required at the operational level in the United Nations system to provide support to Governments and national institutions for implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and other recent United Nations conferences.

Regional commissions are also expected to play a key role; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has assisted and participated in follow-up meetings in the region, notably the Summit Meeting of Social Welfare Ministers from the Rio Group held at Buenos Aires in May 1995 and the regional technical follow-up meeting on the agreements reached at the Social Summit held in Quito in November 1995. ECLAC also assisted in the organization of the Hemispheric Conference on the Eradication of Poverty and Discrimination, which was held in Santiago in January 1996. In response to the Summit's call for the convening of regional meetings on a biennial basis at a high political level to review the progress made towards fulfilling the outcome of the Summit, the Government of Brazil has kindly agreed to host such a meeting in São Paulo in March 1997.

At the subregional level, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at their sixteenth summit conference, in July 1995, urged member States to conduct national consultations and asked the CARICOM secretariat to prepare a Caribbean policy position on social development based on the outcome of these consultations. It is hoped that such a policy will be ready for the regional economic and social conference proposed for next year. A Caribbean ministerial meeting on poverty eradication will be held in Port-of-Spain from 28 October to 1 November 1996 with the assistance of the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Port-of-Spain.

Addressing the causes of poverty is high on the development agenda of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago because of the increase in poverty levels and a shift in the character of poverty to encompass the phenomenon of the "new poor", most of whom have been victims of structural adjustment policies of the past decade. Trinidad and Tobago has always shown a commitment to the provision of a social safety net, but the Government is attempting to approach the problem in a more holistic manner through an integrated and multisectoral strategy. The focus is not only on supportive and remedial measures, but also addresses the rehabilitative and developmental aspects necessary for eliminating the root causes of poverty. The objective is to enable the poor to move out of their predicament and to enjoy sustainable livelihoods. This requires collaboration with all sectors of the national community.

A Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building is being established, and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has obtained the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in this endeavour. The Unit is expected to give permanence to and ensure the continuation of the Government's efforts at poverty eradication and a general improvement in the quality of life of its citizens. It will create an enabling environment to facilitate national dialogue on the development of an intersectoral approach to poverty-eradication policies in order to promote consensus-building and practical approaches to collaborative planning. It is envisaged that the Change Management Unit will strengthen the capacity for planning, management, implementation and monitoring poverty eradication strategies, including the development of national goals and targets.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has also decided to establish a National Social Development

Council under the chairmanship of a senior cabinet minister; the Council will be launched on 24 October, United Nations Day. The National Social Development Council will oversee national action as a follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action emanating from the World Summit for Social Development and to the outcome of related international conferences. The Council will operate at the ministerial and technical levels, and the Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building will serve as its Secretariat. The Council will address the issues of poverty eradication, the expansion of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration.

The United Nations sustainable development matrix, with appropriate adaptations, will be used, since this will facilitate easier collaboration among ministries, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. This exercise has begun through a joint UNDP/ECLAC project which will develop an interactive database for collating national information on social development initiatives and needs. In order to take into account the particular concerns of Trinidad and Tobago, the United Nations matrix has been adapted to include the problems facing young males in society and the emerging phenomenon of street children. The project will involve the participation of civil society, including the communities affected. It is hoped that this project and indeed the efforts generally undertaken by Trinidad and Tobago to eradicate poverty and build social equity will continue to obtain tangible support from the United Nations system and relevant international agencies.

Some 18 months ago, the international community was mobilized at the World Summit for Social Development to confront the seemingly intractable problems of poverty and unemployment and there was great resolve to work collectively to enhance social integration and social development where the well-being of the individual will be paramount. The commitments made in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action need to be implemented so that the social well-being of a significant segment of the world population will be improved as we move apace to the twenty-first century.

**Mr. Wang Xuexian** (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The representative of Costa Rica has made a very good statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and I would like to lend my support to that statement. Many of the things that need to be said have already been said. What we need now is action. Therefore, my statement will be very brief.

In the year and a half since the World Summit for Social Development, many countries have made great efforts in implementing the outcome of the Summit at the national level by designating national focal points, formulating short-, medium- and long-term strategies and plans for social development and starting to take appropriate and concrete measures to implement them. This is indeed commendable.

However, we have also noted with concern that there are more words than substance in some of the actions taken by relevant bodies of the United Nations and that there is very little substantive cooperation at the international level. This trend must be reversed.

Concrete goals for social development were set at the World Summit for Social Development. To attain these goals, all countries have made a commitment to cooperate at the international level. The Declaration of the Summit clearly states that:

> "these goals cannot be achieved by States alone. The international community, the United Nations, [and] the multilateral financial institutions ... need to positively contribute their own share of efforts and resources". (*A/CONF.166/9, para. 27*)

In order to accelerate international cooperation, we deem it essential to stress the following requirements. First, top priority should be given to the eradication of poverty. Poverty eradication was one of the three fundamental issues at the Summit and is a primary task facing many nations. It is absolutely unacceptable that some one fifth of humankind should live in abject poverty, most of them suffering from hunger every day. A commitment was made at the Summit to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty through prompt action. Now we need to see whether the international community, particularly the multilateral financial institutions, are ready to take action in this regard.

Secondly, the mobilization of resources is of key importance. The eradication of poverty, expansion of productive employment and enhancement of social integration all need resources as their material basis. Mobilizing resources is therefore a core issue in the follow-up to the Summit. Commitments were made at the Summit to:

> "mobilize new and additional financial resources that are both adequate and predictable and are mobilized in a way that maximizes the availability of such resources" (*A/CONF.166/9, Commitment 9 (i)*),

and to fulfil as soon as possible the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. The world is still waiting to see if the developed countries will honour these commitments.

Thirdly, the United Nations should play a central coordinating role. Such coordination could focus on ensuring unified and comprehensive implementation and appraisal of the outcome of the Summit and other important international conferences related to social development, and particularly on mobilizing financial resources. Solid progress by the United Nations in this regard will be its most valuable contribution to implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

I should like now to brief the Assembly on China's implementation of the outcome of the Summit. The Chinese Government has formulated its Ninth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and an Outline of Long-Range Objectives to the Year 2000. In formulating this plan and outline, China has taken full account of the requirements of the Summit. China is determined basically to solve the problem, and has helped 200 million people break the cycle of poverty. This is a remarkable achievement by any standard in the world. We are also determined basically to solve the problem of food and clothing for 65 million people who are currently living in a state of poverty. We will continue to expand employment to reduce the number of people unemployed or awaiting employment to a minimum. We are determined to create 40 million new jobs. We are committed to raising living standard and will try to ensure the availability of nine-year compulsory education in the next decade, reduce or eliminate illiteracy among young people and ensure full and comprehensive progress and development. We will also stress environmental protection, ecology and natural resources.

China will, as always, support and cooperate with the United Nations in its efforts in the area of social development and take an active part in international cooperation in this field, thus making its contribution to the promotion of world social development.

**Mr. Gorita** (Romania): My country endorsed the statement delivered today by the Irish delegation on behalf of the European Union, so I would just like to add some specific comments.

The World Summit for Social Development represented a landmark in development-related international cooperation. It created an unprecedented framework for a global social vision projected into the twenty-first century based on the three core themes of the Summit: the elimination of poverty; employment; and social integration. It highlighted the need to complement economic growth with social development and reflected important shifts in the post-cold-war international approach to security through its focus on human security and sustainable human development. Furthermore, it placed emphasis on important principles and values such as responsibility and solidarity within and among nations and the idea of a new social contract, at the global level. This generous and coherent vision gained tremendous political weight through the strong common commitment expressed by States Members of the United Nations from the rostrum of the Summit.

The full and effective implementation of the commitments laid down in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action represents a challenge to Governments, civil society and the international community. Romania believes that Governments bear the primary responsibility for working out and implementing social development policies. At the same time, all actors in civil society, including non-governmental organizations, should participate actively in the attainment of these goals. Likewise, the contributions made by the United Nations and multilateral institutions represent an essential support to the national efforts.

As for the role of the United Nations in this area, I will not go into detail, because my delegation fully shares the views already expressed by the European Union. I wish to commend the progress achieved so far in the work of the three-tiered mechanism — comprising the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development — which has been entrusted with the task of monitoring and implementing related to the Summit.

Romania supports the further strengthening of the functions of the Economic and Social Council to ensure an integrated and multidimensional approach to the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the other major conferences by harmonizing the agendas and work programmes of the functional commissions and enhancing coordination among relevant

United Nations agencies and with the Bretton Woods institutions. At the same time, more effective use of the inputs from the three ad hoc task forces of the Administrative Committee an Coordination and of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women will be extremely helpful in this respect.

We also encourage the extension of the interactive, innovative methods of work introduced in Economic and Social Council and some subsidiary bodies including the Commission for Social Development with a view to developing dialogue between Governments, the representatives of civil society and United Nations agencies.

Social development issues have been a constant priority item on the agenda of the Romanian Government. According to a modern integrated concept, social welfare policy is an important dimension of the Romanian governing programme. One of its major objectives is to protect the population against the social costs of the transition to a market economy. This policy has been carried out in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution of Romania and the human rights treaties to which it is a party, as well as with other relevant principles, such as: promoting social partnership; tailoring social protection to the needs of groups and individuals; decentralizing social policy; and striking a balance between needs and resources, between protection and self-protection and between the needs of current and future generations.

In this context, the outcome of the social Summit provided the basis for reviewing and developing the existing social strategy and laws of Romania. It also provided valuable inspiration for turning our national potential of social innovation to better account.

In the period since the Copenhagen Summit, the Romanian Government has strengthened its actions devoted to improving living standards and enhancing social integration, particularly for the most vulnerable groups. Here are a few facts. First, a project for the development of social services, sponsored by the Action Plan for Coordinated Aid to Poland and Hungary, is now well under way. Secondly, a pilot programme for poverty eradication, at the level of families and communities, was recently launched in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme. Thirdly, through the latest amendments to our law on social assistance, the assistance to the elderly, the disabled, to families without income or with a low income and to other high-risk groups has been substantially improved and diversified. Fourthly, further measures have been taken to enhance the protection of children under the National Plan of Action for Children to improve health care, education and the family environment. Moreover, a bill on the protection of minors in special situations was recently put before Parliament. Two other important bills, on health insurance and on pensions, aimed at reforming these social welfare mechanisms are on the agenda of the Romanian Parliament.

In the field of employment, significant action has been taken to improve training and job access for young people. Furthermore, innovative solutions have been used to reduce unemployment and encourage job creation. For example, in order to shift the emphasis from passive protection to active self-protection, a part of the unemployment compensation fund has been successfully used since 1995 to grant credits for the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises, with the stipulation that the entrepreneurs hire unemployed people for at least 50 per cent of the newly created positions.

Convinced that gender equality is a prerequisite for sound economic and social development, the Romanian Government has set up, in response to both the Beijing and the Copenhagen Conferences, a State department for the advancement of women. The subject of the empowerment of women was also broached at a recent subregional conference organized in Bucharest in cooperation with the United Nations on the implementation in Central and Eastern Europe of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The development of partnership with the main actors of civil society in the implementation of the outcome of the major conferences has been a constant concern of the Romanian Government. An important institutional step to this effect was to set up an interministerial working group for cooperation with civil society.

My delegation is convinced that international cooperation at all levels — bilateral, regional and global — is crucial for the effective implementation of the goals of the social Summit. Therefore, we welcome the Austria's initiative to host a regional conference on follow-up to the Summit and wish to participate actively in its preparation.

**Mr. Mahugu** (Kenya): At the outset, I wish to join previous speakers in commending you, Mr. President, on the able manner in which you are presiding over the work of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

I also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, contained in document A/51/348. My delegation would like to associate itself with the views expressed by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 45, on "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/7 reaffirmed the crucial role to be played by the Commission for Social Development in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action underscored the conviction that development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and between our nations. Conversely, social development and social justice cannot be achieved in the absence of peace and security, or without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This interdependence, which was recognized 51 years ago in the Charter of the United Nations, has acquired even greater importance today.

The holding of the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen in March 1995 was a significant milestone in the realization that the eradication of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration, and the achievement of sustainable development required an internationally coordinated strategy. Poverty continues to be the root cause of most ills in society despite the high level of prosperity achieved by sections of the world community this century. It manifests itself in many ways and should be tackled in an integrated manner, since economic development and social progress are interrelated. Appropriate action is therefore required to address the effects of poverty in both developing and developed countries.

We recognize that the primary responsibility for poverty eradication rests with national Governments and, more important, poverty eradication depends on their ability to mobilize grass-roots community involvement in the initiation and execution of income-generating programmes. However, without the timely and effective support of the international community as envisaged in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, these efforts will have limited impact.

In this regard, Kenya commends the Administrative Committee on Coordination for establishing inter-agency task forces designed to help coordinate United Nations activities in an integrated manner. We are also encouraged by the initiatives taken so far by the various United Nations bodies to prioritize poverty eradication in their programmes. We therefore look forward to healthy and enhanced complementarity between national strategies and the priorities of United Nations bodies and agencies.

Towards this end, my delegation thanks the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the President of the World Bank and the Heads of all United Nations agencies, for launching the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa on 15 March 1996. Its programmes of concrete action will accelerate Africa's development. We have no doubt that this Initiative on Africa, designed to complement the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development will be instrumental in the eradication of poverty in Africa.

As a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, the Government of Kenya, in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, has prepared a comprehensive economic policy framework paper which outlines the development strategy and key plans to be implemented over the next three years. The national objectives and strategies formulated in the policy paper are designed to create conditions for rapid and sustained economic growth, to a level which will result in a significant reduction in unemployment and poverty in my country on the basis of the following measures: first, maintaining macroeconomic stability by strengthening money and public sector financing; secondly, improving efficiency in the public sector by accelerating and streamlining reform in the civil service; thirdly, enhancing the external and domestic competitiveness of the economy; and fourthly, addressing the social aspects of development through targeted poverty interventions for vulnerable groups.

To achieve a significant reduction in unemployment and poverty, our economy needs to grow at an average of over 5 per cent of real gross domestic product. In this context, my Government has introduced measures designed to provide an enabling environment for private sector development with an emphasis on policies which are environmentally friendly. While the policies in support of growth and the social sectors are designed to ensure that the benefits of development reach the poor, targeted interventions will be required to provide income support to those who cannot wait until the growth process gathers full steam, as well as to those who cannot readily

participate in it because of special handicaps such as geographical isolation. The most important targeted interventions will be in rural areas where the need for remunerated employment is most acute. Energizing the informal sector, as the main source of income for about a quarter of rural households and possibly more in urban areas, will be an effective means of reducing poverty.

Kenya has designated national focal points to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action in an integrated manner. We have established committees from the grass-roots to the national levels, comprising Government officials, local communities and non-governmental organizations. We have also established special social development funds committed to financing projects for social development, including the fight against poverty at the grass-roots level.

Kenya therefore wishes to reaffirm its support for observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in 1996 and the proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, as contained in General Assembly resolution 50/107. We fully recognize that the goal of poverty eradication represents a major challenge for the United Nations system. In this regard, we are of the view that the United Nations system has an important role to play in the eradication of poverty by assisting Member States to translate into reality the global goals and commitments of international conferences, especially the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development.

In order to realize these objectives, there is an urgent need to mobilize substantial new and additional resources from all sources, in both developing and developed countries, in conformity with the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Kenya urges the urgent fulfilment of the previously agreed United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product of the developed countries for the overall official development assistance as soon as possible, and an increase in the share of funding for social development programmes.

In conclusion, my delegation is convinced that the international community should now demonstrate political will by honouring the commitments made if we are to realize these objectives.

**Mr. Amorim** (Brazil): I have the honour to speak on agenda item 45, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". I wish to start by associating my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as the statement made by the representative of Bolivia, speaking on behalf of the Rio Group. I would also like to commend Ambassador Somavía's statement which once again proved that he is a guiding spirit when it comes to this subject.

Important changes have taken place in recent months with regard to the follow-up of the Copenhagen World Summit. These are reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, which summarizes with clarity the alternatives open to us to maintain the momentum for the implementation of the commitments adopted during that Summit.

The Commission for Social Development has been designated by the General Assembly as the functional commission with the primary responsibility for addressing social and development matters. In addition, the Commission has submitted to the Economic and Social Council a multi-year programme of work to the year 2000, providing for comprehensive consideration of relevant themes within its field of responsibility.

These and other steps, enumerated in greater detail in the report, indicate the need to move from conceptual to more concrete approaches. The centrality of the question of development is no longer an issue among us. On the contrary, the measures recently submitted by the Commission for Social Development to the Economic and Social Council actually reflect a concerted effort to upgrade the question of development within the United Nations.

As a consequence of the results of recent global conferences, new strategies are being considered in the fight against poverty. In the United Nations, there is a growing awareness that issues such as investment, trade and financial flows, among others, should be urgently discussed by the Organization. It is also widely felt that the Bretton Woods institutions, when addressing questions related to development, should lay stronger emphasis on the social dimension of structural adjustment programmes.

These changes have firm and historic roots. They also reflect ongoing discussions regarding the concrete measures the United Nations should take to raise strong and visible support in the fight against poverty. For my delegation, it is particularly encouraging in this context to welcome the fact that the Secretary-General has been asked by the Commission for Social Development to

consult with relevant international organizations, among them the Bretton Woods institutions, with a view to securing their cooperation in the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action. We hope that appropriate mechanisms will be soon established to facilitate this dialogue.

These efforts, inspired and undertaken by the United Nations, are indeed important. They constitute the background against which we must work. But when it comes to the implementation and monitoring of the mechanisms set forth in Copenhagen, nothing can replace the role that Governments and civil society must play at the national level. This was recognized by the Heads of State or Government at the Summit.

In Latin America, there is a growing awareness of this balance between self-promoted development and multilateral cooperation. As a consequence, Governments in the region have adopted a more realistic approach in their attempts to translate into concrete action their political commitment to the Summit's recommendations. The Rio Group countries, for instance, have established a regional mechanism dedicated to defining priorities designed to strengthen social policy programmes. Since Copenhagen, a number of meetings have taken place with the objective of reviewing and reformulating existing social policies on the basis of an integrated approach to social development. Two of these meetings were held at the ministerial level, in Buenos Aires and in Quito. The Summit of the Heads of State and Heads of Government of the Rio Group, which took place in Bolivia last September, highlighted the priorities accorded by the Group to the challenges facing our region.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, Brazil will have the honour next year to host a meeting in São Paulo at a high political level to evaluate the progress made towards implementing the outcome of the Summit. This event will be held in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which played a key role in the Summit follow-up meetings of Quito and Buenos Aires. Other players with an active role in the development question will also participate, including non-governmental organizations.

We welcome the cooperation of non-governmental organizations in this domain. As we all know, as its priority task next year the Commission on Social Development will be targeting matters related to productive employment and sustainable livelihood. It is only logical to assume that such themes could greatly benefit from the interaction generated by the participation of different segments of our civil societies in these discussions.

Brazil has often stated that a country's capacity to satisfy the needs of its people depends on good social indicators, political stability, economic competitiveness, and scientific and technological progress. Without economic growth, however, the elimination of poverty, unemployment and marginalization loses the very fuel upon which it depends to revise adverse situations in these different domains. The common denominator of the multiple aspects of these problems is still development. Therein lies the key to peace, social justice, full employment and democracy.

**Mr. Abdellah** (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Speaking today under agenda item 45, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", I should like to associate myself with the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. My country's contribution will consequently be based on certain themes that are of particular interest to us.

The review of the follow-up of the Copenhagen Summit offers us, for the second consecutive year, the opportunity to review at both the national and international levels our achievements in the context of the objectives and commitments assumed at the Summit. Clearly, this will not be an exhaustive consideration, and even less a stock-taking, since the task we have set ourselves is a long-term one. Nevertheless, in this way we are continuing our dialogue on the best ways and means of strengthening the necessary complementarity among our countries in a world dominated by globalization and interdependence.

Globalization is a positive force for the future of the entire world: unprecedented development in investment and trade, the opening up of the most populous regions of the world to international trade; and the possibility for more developing countries to improve their populations' living standards. Nevertheless, globalization also entails risks and can have potentially negative consequences for development by exacerbating inequalities among countries and, within countries themselves, among individuals.

Of course, no country is immune to this trend, but the threat looms chiefly over the countries of the South, particularly those low-income countries that are unable to benefit from the advantages of globalization and are becoming increasingly marginalized. This is why our

country, in the resolution adopted last year on the agenda item now under consideration, reaffirmed the validity of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. It was also stressed that strong determination is needed to invest in people and in their well-being in order to achieve the objectives of social development. We must commit ourselves to reducing poverty, eradicating destitution, creating new job possibilities and reducing unemployment. To this end, the promotion of an integrated and multidimensional approach was underlined. These fundamental elements for the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action should be considered within the context of an effective partnership and cooperation among Governments and individuals in civil society.

*Mr. Fernández Estigarribia (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

In this connection, concerning national action for the effective implementation of the commitments assumed at Copenhagen, I should like to recall here the main areas in which my country has already taken action. Tunisia's pioneering and innovative achievements in this respect have in many ways been reinforced by the decisions of the international community within the context of the World Summit for Social Development. Tunisia's actions for social development are ambitious and multidimensional. They are the cornerstone of our national policy to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the entire population, and they aim to guarantee both present and future generations conditions that are conducive to equity and prosperity.

I should like briefly to touch on a number of sectoral and inter-sectoral programmes, such as the initiative for the advancement of women, which Tunisia set up to ensure that comprehensive sustainable development, for the country. The main aspect of this multidimensional action is unquestionably the advancement of the role of women in the development process. We have taken many and varied measures in this area. In 1988, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali reaffirmed his devotion to the "Code of Rights and Obligations", a real source of pride for modern Tunisia. He did this by creating a ministry for women's and family affairs.

A monitoring mechanism on the status of women was set up to remedy the lack of information on the role of women in economic activity. Its task is to gather information on the situation of women and to analyse and disseminate it. A special programme was begun aimed at integrating 67,000 young women, aged 15 to 29, in the national literacy programme.

Greater opportunities have been made available to women so that they can benefit from continuing training programmes and improve their chances of access to management posts. We have also strengthened their right to work by enacting legislation and specific measures, and several projects in favour of rural women have been initiated.

The second aspect of social development that I would like to touch on relates to education, teaching, scientific research and vocational training. In Tunisia, basic education is free of charge and compulsory until the age of 17. The educational system was restructured in 1991, from kindergarten up to the last year of higher education. In the area of scientific research, a State secretariat was set up, followed by the establishment of new specialized institutes for scientific research. The vocational- training sector was also completely restructured, which has led to the creation of new, specialized structures.

Another, no less important, area of human development is that of basic health care. This sector, which has always been a priority, has received additional impetus during this past decade. The resources allocated to this sector have increased consistently, in the range of 23 per cent per year. Through the mobilization of supplementary human and material resources, we have seen improvements in health-care coverage and in the main health indicators. Tunisia has thus reached the goals of "Health for All by the Year 2000", as advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO).

A key sector to which Tunisia attaches priority importance is that of children. Tunisia considers improving the status of children as an integral part of the general amelioration of the social situation. Accordingly, it has focused its efforts on developing mechanisms to ensure the follow-up and monitoring of children in order to protect them and to promote their development. In this respect, Tunisia has adopted a code for the protection of the rights of children.

One last point that is fundamental to the national development strategy is that of promoting social solidarity in the context of combating exclusion. Tunisian policy in this area consists of employment programmes creating income sources and combating poverty in all its aspects.

I should like to mention here certain achievements in this area. The national programme for needy families has risen from 73,590 recipient families in 1987 to 101,000 in 1993. As regards child protection, over the last few years 100,000 children from 3 to 6 years of age have benefited from children's development programmes. Several centres for social defence and social integration have been created, and a number of activities have been carried out for the advancement of the disabled and for their inclusion in active life. We have set up several regional centres to protect elderly persons in need and benefits given to the elderly have been increased.

I should like to dwell a little longer on the National Solidarity Fund, the latest of our achievements for human development. Created in 1992 at the initiative of the President of the Republic, the National Solidarity Fund is aimed at financing services for low-income social categories and for towns lacking the minimum of basic infrastructures. Generally, it applies to isolated rural areas that are difficult to reach and that, due to the high unit cost of services, do not meet the criteria laid down in development plans. The Fund is financed from various sources, in particular by voluntary contributions from citizens, and enterprises and by grants and subsidies allocated by the State budget.

In 1993, a standing committee for the Solidarity Fund was set up to define, together with the central and regional administration services, criteria for identifying priority intervention areas. Along with these services, it monitors the implementation and progress of projects.

Six basic services were identified: roads and tracks, drinking water, electrification, education, health and housing, to which have been added cultural centres, youth activity centres, sanitation, combating desertification, and so on.

In 1994, the Fund was charged with improving income and employment levels in the zones concerned, and with seeing that people remain on their lands and in their home areas, which involves creating and consolidating income sources. From 1993 to 1996, the National Solidarity Fund made it possible to provide 35,160 homes with electricity and 60,382 homes with drinking water; to build or to improve 8,796 homes; and to build 1,565 kilometres of roads and tracks, 75 schools and 71 health-care centres.

The impact of the Fund on the populations concerned has been extremely beneficial, and it has further increased the spirit of solidarity of the Tunisian people in this respect. Thus, we decided to implement, during the period 1995 to 2000, a more ambitious national programme to develop all of the marginal areas by the year 2000. To strengthen these development activities, in 1996 the Fund was converted to a State secretariat.

As regards action at the international level for the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, Tunisia believes that the entire international community must mobilize, in a spirit of solidarity and effectiveness, to support the efforts and the sacrifices made by the developing countries in this area. However, we must recognize that the work now being done by the developed countries and by the United Nations system is not commensurate with the scale of the problems facing many countries, including a large number of African countries. This shortfall is reflected in the level of official development assistance and of investment, and in the way the debt problem is being dealt with.

In this spirit, we must urgently strive to reach the goal, set by the Summit, of devoting 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries to official development assistance. It would also be useful to mobilize new, substantial additional resources from all sources, whether national or international, public or private, traditional or new.

In this respect, my delegation is pleased with the commitment assumed by the G-7 Summit, held in Lyons in June 1996, to set in motion a world partnership for development for countries with emerging economies, for the poorest countries and for the sub-Saharan African countries. We also note the commitment of the G-7 countries to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for private trade and financial flows to developing countries, as well as to guarantee major flows of official development assistance and to improve the quality of that assistance.

As regards international cooperation to promote sustainable development and with respect to building a consensus on development objectives and policies, my delegation would like to recall the following:

Member countries should undertake to respect the 20/20 formula. This implies firstly that the industrialized countries should devote 20 per cent of their official development assistance to basic social programmes. It is clear that developing countries at the same time should

devote 20 per cent of their national budgets to human development.

As regards new and innovative ideas to mobilize funds, the following principles should be reaffirmed. Funds mobilized by new and innovative ideas should not take the place of official development assistance. New and innovative funding methods should be distinct from financing from the regular budget and peacekeeping budget of the United Nations. Lastly, we feel that public investment remains necessary, but it must be supported by private investment in financing for development.

As regards the United Nations in the coordination and implementation of policies decided at the multilateral level, Tunisia stresses the essential role of the Organization. Its effectiveness, however, depends on its capacity to adapt, and on the political will of States to strengthen cooperation and partnership for economic and social development.

In this respect, Tunisia is pleased with the expansion of the mandate of the Commission for Social Development, which has been given the chief responsibility for the follow-up and review of the application of the results of the World Summit for Social Development. However, we would like to stress that the Commission will only be able to carry out its work successfully if Member States provide tangible support and give it the necessary means.

Lastly, as regards the specialized agencies, and particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, Tunisia would like to mention the role they have been given in mobilizing financial resources for social development and in acting on the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen, particularly as regards debt reduction in developing countries and assistance to countries carrying out structural adjustments so that they can move from the stage of adjustment to that of development.

**Mr. Hormel** (United States of America): When Vice-President Gore addressed the World Summit for Social Development, he asked the question: "What can be done to lift the poorest of our citizens into productive lives?" It is fitting that we take stock today of the progress we have made in implementing the ambitious commitments made 18 months ago in Copenhagen.

As representatives of Governments, we agreed at the Summit that we, in partnership with non-governmental organizations and the actors of civil society, would eradicate absolute poverty, create jobs, and empower women and men, especially older persons and people with disabilities, to become full participants in their societies. These are challenging goals, but the tools are at hand to achieve them and progress has been made.

The United States is committed to alleviating poverty by attacking its root causes. Indeed, in his State of the Union address this year, President Clinton spoke to a number of issues that address this goal. These include a call for an increase in the minimum wage, which was recently enacted by our Congress; the need for pensions for all workers; and reform of health insurance policies so that people will be able to keep health insurance when they change jobs and be free of the fear that they will not be able to get health insurance in a new job because of their health condition. The health insurance reforms have also been signed into law by President Clinton.

We are dedicated to reducing the federal deficit, which is key to investment, growth and job creation. We are also addressing falling real wages, and expanding tax credits for working families with children. Action to ensure that spouses pay child support, and strategies to provide support for child care for working parents, are also priorities.

At Copenhagen, we gave the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) a mandate to address poverty alleviation through coordinated social development programmes. My Government fully supports UNDP's commitment to poverty eradication through its Poverty Strategies Initiative. We also called on the multilateral development banks and other donors to enhance targeted social development investment lending. We are pleased that the international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank and the Asian and Inter-American Development Banks, are responding to this imperative.

Employment growth and poverty alleviation are critically linked. The United States is currently enjoying one of the lowest rates of unemployment since the early 1970s. Equally important, we have seen unemployment rates fall while inflation has remained in check. While the United States clearly has not faced the daunting economic challenges of the developing countries, some factors that have helped us to achieve this positive state of affairs may be applicable elsewhere.

A society in which individuals are encouraged to take initiative, coupled with a flexible job market that facilitates rather than impedes mobility, is a key factor.

Similarly, an economy open to competition will help to provide the confidence needed to attract private investment that is critical to growth and job creation. Finally, sound monetary and fiscal policies implemented by a government which is transparent and accountable will also help to provide the confidence needed to attract private sector investment that is critical to growth and job creation.

We gathered in Copenhagen to chart a course of action that would "put people first". Unfortunately, progress has been painfully slow with regard to the integration of people with disabilities into the economic and social mainstream. We recall that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development stated that

> "one of the world's largest minorities, more than 1 in 10, are people with disabilities, who are too often forced into poverty, unemployment and social isolation." *(A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 16 (h))*

Although the series of United Nations conferences has focused increasing attention on issues affecting the disabled, we must not lose the momentum gained through the commitment of the global community. For instance, we are seeing that more and more countries are adopting non-discrimination laws that protect the rights of persons with disabilities. This is an essential step towards empowerment, inclusion, and fostering independence.

Work within the United Nations on disability issues continues to achieve modest and positive success. This is due largely to the efforts of the Commission for Social Development's Special Rapporteur on Disability, who is now in the third year of assisting Member States to implement the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities that were adopted by this body in 1993. His work should continue. A panel of experts to advise the Special Rapporteur ensures that non-governmental organizations working in the disability field do so in partnership with the United Nations — again, work that must continue and be a priority in the future.

The First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton, pledged in Copenhagen an investment of $100 million over 10 years to achieve higher school-completion rates for girls in developing countries. Girls' education is one of the most important investments developing countries can make. Yet out of every three children who are not in school, two are girls. The Girls' and Women's Education Initiative (GWEI) signalled a new commitment that all basic education programmes assisted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will address the special barriers that prevent girls from enroling, completing and achieving equally with boys in school.

In September of this year, a special GWEI project was awarded to provide technical leadership to this effort. USAID currently funds basic education activities in 22 countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Near East. Under the new project, six "emphasis" countries will focus on building sustainable public-private partnerships to support girls' and women's education.

The New Partnerships Initiative, announced in Copenhagen by Vice-President Gore, is a comprehensive framework to strengthen civil society and to encourage partnership between the public and private sectors. It is an approach to sustainable development that seeks to transcend old debates about the relative merits of top-down or bottom-up assistance models. Instead, it stresses the need to build synergy between efforts at both levels and across the sectors within which our Agency for International Development works.

Working with partners in 18 countries, USAID is undertaking a learning process designed to explore and document new ways to build capacity and linkages among groups at the local level; to forge solid society-to-society linkages between these local groups and their United States counterparts; and to foster a legal, regulatory and fiscal environment conducive to citizen participation and community initiative.

USAID's micro-enterprise programme, initiated in June 1994, is designed to reach the poorest members of society, particularly women, with loans and savings services. It aims to build financially independent institutions that serve increasing numbers of poor entrepreneurs. During 1996, USAID allocated $120 million for micro-enterprise funding in developing countries. At a recent congressional round table, USAID pledged to continue its micro-enterprise initiative in 1997 and 1998.

In its resolution 50/161, this body established a three-tiered process, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development, to monitor implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. In July, the Economic and Social Council decided to annualize the meetings of the Commission for Social

Development and to expand its membership in order to strengthen the Commission's ability to fulfil this monitoring role. It is well known that my Government opposed this decision by the Council. Now we must work together to ensure that the Commission can respond effectively to its new mandate.

We welcome the fact that the Commission has adopted a multi-year program of work, and we applaud its decision to invite experts to contribute to that work. The Commission has chosen the theme of employment for review at its next session. We look forward to participating in that discussion, while emphasizing that the Commission must work closely with the International Labour Organization in its consideration of this topic. The ILO chairs the Summit follow-up Task Force on full employment and sustainable livelihoods for all.

If the promise of Copenhagen is to be realized, we must affirm our commitment to the goals of the World Summit for Social Development. The United States is prepared to do its part to work for a more just and equitable global community.

**Mr. Biørn Lian** (Norway): My delegation fully supports the statement made by the representative of the European Union. We would like, however, to make a few additional comments regarding the follow-up of the 20/20 initiative.

The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen was a manifestation of a growing consensus that people must be at the centre of our development efforts. A central aspect of this consensus is the commitment to the goal of universal access to basic social services. Such services do not only produce invaluable social benefits; they are essential for sustainable economic development and constitute an investment in people's hopes for the future. Investing in people's health and education is a long-term investment for the benefit of society at large and should be an integral part of any strategy for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

International conferences such as the Summit have often been criticized for producing statements of good intentions, but little action. One of the Summit's outcomes that could prove such criticisms wrong was the call upon interested countries to implement the so-called 20/20 initiative, which aims at achieving universal access to basic social services. We believe the 20/20 concept has a special appeal, *inter alia*, because of the mutuality of the commitment involved. It does not address the donor community alone, nor is it another conditionality for aid. It is intended to be a tool for both developing countries and their partners jointly to give higher priority to basic social services.

Norway has taken a special interest in making sure that this commitment from Copenhagen is translated into action. Together with the Government of the Netherlands, we therefore invited interested countries and multilateral organizations to Oslo in April of this year in order to consider ways to implement this initiative. Today I am able to report that the meeting was successful. A comprehensive analysis of the 20/20 initiative and its potential was undertaken, and I believe that we managed to bring the objective of universal access to basic social services one important step closer to becoming a reality.

There was broad agreement at the meeting in Oslo that the fight against poverty requires a broad range of policies and actions at all levels, including, *inter alia*, such macroeconomic policies and actions to meet basic human needs. Within this framework, development of basic social services was considered of particular importance in reducing the worst aspects of poverty and as a key element in breaking the poverty cycle.

The 20/20 initiative should be seen in this context and should be applied as a pragmatic and flexible guideline. The full outcome of the Oslo meeting — "The Oslo Consensus on 20/20" — is available as United Nations document A/51/140.

Having said that, the real test of success will, of course, be the extent to which we are able to translate the Oslo Consensus into practical action. Participants at the Oslo meeting agreed that developing countries should take the lead and set the priorities. Developing-country Governments were encouraged to prepare basic social programmes as part of the poverty-reduction strategy suggested by the Summit, with the aim of achieving universal access to basic social services over an ambitious but realistic time period. Donor countries and multilateral agencies were invited to provide technical and financial support for the preparation and implementation of such programmes. Several developing countries present expressed their interest in being "pilot cases" for the initiative.

For our part, we recently had a review of our development cooperation policy in the Norwegian Parliament, and I am happy to report that there was strong support for giving increased priority to basic social

services and for reaching, and even going beyond, the 20/20 goal. This has now been followed up in the Government's budget proposal for 1997, which includes significant increases in the allocations for health and education purposes.

The participants in the Oslo meeting agreed that a follow-up meeting should be held within two years to exchange information and experience, and to review and assess progress in implementing the 20/20 initiative. Norway took on the responsibility of ensuring that such a follow-up meeting will take place. It is our sincere hope that interest in the initiative will have grown significantly by then and that we will be able to review concrete experiences underway in a number of countries.

**Mr. Scarpetta** (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is my honour to address the General Assembly on agenda item 45, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". Colombia associates itself with the statement made this morning by Costa Rica in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, and wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the report on the item before us today.

The World Summit for Social Development was a historic event that brought together the Heads of State or Government of the world in order to recognize the importance of social development and the well-being of humanity, and to give the highest priority to these objectives in the light of the urgent need to solve serious social problems, particularly poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

During the Summit the Heads of State or Government recognized that the primary responsibility to attain the goals set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action rested with the national Governments themselves. The previous session of the General Assembly reiterated its call to Governments to define time-bound goals and targets for reducing overall poverty and for expanding employment issues as issues of the highest priority.

The guidelines that the Government of Colombia has followed in drafting its development plan, known nationally as the "Social Leap", fully coincide with those of the Copenhagen Summit. The Government's development plan gives priority to the eradication of poverty, the creation of productive employment, social integration and attending to the basic needs of society.

The Government of Colombia has set in motion the Social Solidarity Network, a central element of its strategy. Its objective is to improve the living conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable sectors, and to facilitate their participation in the major social programmes through joint efforts by State and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society. The Social Solidarity Network has been implementing 13 special programmes, aimed at the most vulnerable sectors of the population affected by poverty.

These include the plan for emergency urban employment, through which the Government has co-financed 572 projects that have benefited 42,400 people. The assistance programme to support and train the poor and the unemployed has benefited 21,000 low-income young people. The plan for emergency rural employment has financed 635 projects that have generated income for 27,000 families. The programme for child and maternal care has provided subsidized social security for 82,000 mothers and 64,000 children under a year of age. Close to 900,000 children have benefited from the programmes for food assistance. The programme to support mothers who are heads of families with children in elementary schools has assisted 78,128 mothers. The programme to help the elderly, which focuses on the most vulnerable group — the destitute elderly — has aided 67,000 people. The rural housing programme has provided subsidies for 147,343 families; and owing to the programme for sport and artistic talent, 2,150 young people have obtained access to economic support.

Likewise, among the social policies in favour of children, the Government has promoted a "pact for childhood", through which the Government and civil society have carried out joint activities in the fields of health, nutrition, education, childhood protection and justice, all within a structured and permanent plan.

In this way, the Government fulfils one of the objectives of the Declaration by defining goals and objectives, within a time-bound framework, in order to reduce poverty and to increase employment. The Government has formulated specific and concrete plans aimed at modernizing the productive structures of the country, in order to legitimize a new economic plan through genuine proposals for social development, based on the concept of social solidarity and good governance.

At the regional level, Colombia has actively participated in meetings convened by the Rio Group. In

this regard it associates itself with the statement made by Bolivia on behalf of the Group. During the most recent Rio Group Summit, which took place in Cochabamba on 3 and 4 September, the Governments reiterated their commitment to fight against poverty, malnutrition, marginalization, lack of access to health services, and illiteracy, through policies aimed at sustainable social development in the mid- and long term.

In addition to the efforts made by Governments in the national context, it is necessary to reiterate, as the Secretary-General does in his report, the importance of international support and cooperation among nations, including between developed and developing countries and among individual developing countries. This cooperation should be based on equality, mutual benefit and the spirit of solidarity. Technical assistance for national programmes and the support of international financial organisms are required.

The General Assembly in its resolution 50/161 reaffirmed the importance of agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing countries to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes. This initiative, if carried out effectively, should benefit the poorest and most vulnerable social sectors.

It is equally necessary effectively to fulfil a commitment of the Copenhagen Declaration: the pledge of the donor Governments to strive to achieve as soon as possible the agreed target of allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance. These two important commitments were reiterated by President Ernesto Samper Pizano, in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, in the message he addressed to French President Jacques Chirac, in the latter's capacity as Chairman of the Group of Seven on the eve of that Group's meeting in Lyon.

The United Nations should play a fundamental role in following up on the implementation of the Summit results. In this regard, the Commission for Social Development's recent important decisions to hold annual meetings and to increase its membership will make its work more effective. Colombia also hopes that the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) will lead to significant progress. These would be laudable results of the Copenhagen Summit, where the current Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations acted so well as Vice-President and Chairman of the Main Committee.

Colombia will continue to implement firm internal measures to combat poverty and unemployment and to promote social integration, since it is convinced that we should focus on the human being as the centre of development. As President Ernesto Samper stated to this body, the final objective should be the creation of a new citizen who is more productive in the economic field, participates more in the political field, and provides more solidarity in the social field.

**Mrs. Florez Prida** (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: May I, at the outset, endorse the statement made by the delegation of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The World Summit for Social Development is credited with having strengthened our recognition of the human being as the purpose and goal of any national or global strategy or policy for development. However, there are still innumerable obstacles to achieving this goal, many of them structural.

1996 has marked an important turning point in the Summit follow-up, primarily because of the focus on the multidimensional and multisectoral nature of international cooperation for the eradication of poverty. Last year, 25 per cent of the world's population lived below the unbearable level of absolute poverty, most of them in developing countries, particularly in Africa. Inequality in the distribution of wealth at the global, national and territorial levels has been growing rapidly.

My delegation is deeply concerned by the situation described by the Secretary-General in his report in document A/51/348. It shows that, although some progress has been made, it is not enough given the extent of the problems, some of which, rather than abating, have gotten worse. The difficult situation facing the international mobilization of development resources deserves special attention. The official development assistance provided by most donor countries has decreased and, apparently, will continue to dwindle over the next several years, since the foreign assistance has been one of the budget items most affected by deficit-reduction programmes in donor countries.

The burden of the foreign debt continues to crush a significant number of developing countries and the proposed relief measures are in many cases accompanied

by the imposition of structural reform and adjustment programmes, whose negative impact on the people of the debtor countries has contributed to the development of explosive social situations in those countries. The globalization of the economy and the effects of neoliberal policies are increasingly frustrating the realization of the noble goals of social justice included in the Copenhagen commitments.

The African countries and the so-called least developed countries need special attention. For this group of nations, recent developments have been extremely negative. Political will continues to be crucial to solving the gloomy prospects ahead. Resources do exist, but they are wasted on an arms race inconceivable in the wake of the so-called end of the cold war.

My delegation wishes to express its most resolute support for the decisions of the Economic and Social Council on the composition and working methods of the Commission for Social Development, and is convinced that this body is in a better position today to fulfil the mandate this Assembly entrusted to it in resolution 50/161.

I should also like to recognize the results achieved through the system-wide coordination of work on the Copenhagen Summit follow-up. This was evident in the organization of discussions and additional activities during the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. We hope that there will be further improvements during the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, which begins next year.

Over the last three decades, Cuba has designed and put into practice, with significant results, policies and strategies aimed at achieving development on the basis of a fairer and more equitable distribution of available resources. Cuba has thus managed to meet primary health, education and social-security needs, to mention but a few and, according to several indices, even to surpass them, despite a particularly tense economic situation, aggravated by the tightening of the United States blockade of Cuba.

These results have reinforced the validity of the thesis that, in a framework of social justice, it is possible to achieve certain basic social development goals in circumstances of scarce economic growth and even decline. However, numerous social development projects have been discontinued and it has become apparent that it is impossible for us to make steady progress towards social development without an international environment conducive to our economic growth and overall development.

My country, as always, is ready to share its experiences in this sphere and to participate actively in any effort of the international community to promote compliance with the commitments entered into during the Copenhagen Summit.

**Mr. Wibisono** (Indonesia): I would first like to welcome the consideration of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development in this plenary session. It reflects the level of importance attached to the commitments made in Copenhagen. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica for the statement she delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

When the international community decided to convene the World Summit for Social Development, it did so with the clear purpose of promoting higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development. It did so to find solutions to international economic, social, health and related problems. While the Summit did succeed in bringing together Heads of State and Government to lend the highest levels of support to this undertaking, and did move social development to the centre of international attention, serious problems remain. The developing countries have not reaped the benefits of globalization and in fact many of their economies continue to suffer reversals. Rampant poverty in the world remains one of the more serious threats to peace and stability, in addition to being a barrier to social progress.

We in the international community committed ourselves to eradicating poverty. We committed ourselves to creating an enabling environment for social development. We committed ourselves to an agenda that would remove obstacles, free the potential of the individual to improve his or her standard of living and the welfare of children. The propositions enunciated at Copenhagen were simple: reduce poverty, increase employment, improve social integration. Yet too many countries remain marginalized with little sign of help forthcoming in the immediate future, and too many people continue to pass their lives with little or no hope.

Indonesia recognizes that the primary responsibility for social development is at the national level. And developing countries are doing what they can with what they have. But we cannot accept that the developing

countries are to undertake significant measures — let alone achieve the Summit's goals — with their hands tied. Only when the international economic situation is conducive to development and international cooperation for development strengthened will the developing countries be in a realistic position to achieve any meaningful and lasting progress.

A new compact for international development needs to be pursued, based on the spirit of partnership and cooperation. And I would not hesitate to add that any efforts within the United Nations should be geared toward supporting such a partnership, with a view to making the United Nations more responsive to poverty-alleviation activities. However, I would also caution that any deviation from such a course must be avoided.

At the same time, it is urgent and absolutely necessary for the international community to take action to solve the debt burdens of the developing countries. The recent proposal of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to address the indebtedness of the heavily indebted poor countries is a welcome step, although it will require modification to remove its restrictive aspects. The poverty and destitution of a country should not be made an occasion for forcing on it alien values nor for making judgments that bear little or no relation to development.

Furthermore, the agreed official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product of the developed countries must be fulfilled at the earliest possible time. And we still await a multilateral trading system that is equitable, transparent and rule-based, in accordance with the conclusions of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

During this session of the General Assembly we need to move forward vigorously on the agreed conclusions 1996/1 adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment. Those conclusions support the efforts of the Member States to implement their global goals and commitments in the field of poverty alleviation made at several international conferences, in particular at the World Summit for Social Development. The General Assembly should, moreover, provide the necessary guidance to ensure that the entire United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, works cohesively to implement the conclusions and undertakes substantive follow-up to the Summit.

Although the special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development is still four years away, it is important to closely monitor both the progress on and the obstacles to the implementation of the agreements reached at the Summit, as well as the coordination efforts outlined in resolution S-1996/1. In this regard, the revitalized Commission for Social Development has ample room to play a role.

Indonesia has been active in addressing its own problems of poverty, unemployment and social integration. In 1970, 60 per cent of our population — 70 million people — were poor. By 1993, after considerable efforts by the Government to improve the economic situation, the number of poor had declined to 25.9 million people, or only 13.7 per cent. And during that same time, the population in Indonesia increased by 73 million. Our goal now is to reduce the numbers of poor, especially the absolute poor, by 12 million people. One means being employed is what we term the IDT Programme, or financial assistance under presidential instruction. The IDT channels small amounts of seed capital to less developed villages, providing local communities with input into programme development and implementation. The people themselves become empowered to contribute to development, for it is they who will reap the benefits.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the central importance for the international community to respond effectively and cohesively to meeting the expectations raised at Copenhagen. For although each nation must bear responsibility for improving its socio-economic situation, problems of a global nature demand global solutions. With all certainty, to ignore the plight of the poorest among us and to become lax in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development is to hamper future progress and prosperity for all humanity.

**Mr. Jayanama** (Thailand): The Thai delegation would like to associate itself with the important statement delivered earlier by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Thailand would also like to express its support for the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Twentieth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China.

We would also like to commend the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. We wish to draw particular attention to the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as mentioned in the report. ESCAP can

play an important role in enhancing regional cooperation and in achieving the outcomes of the Summit through means such as the proposed regional ministerial conference on social development in 1997 to review progress in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

It was acknowledged last year in Copenhagen that

> "the primary responsibility to attain the goals set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action rested with national Governments". *(A/51/348, para. 11)*

This sentiment was further emphasized by the adoption of resolution 50/161 in 1995, wherein the General Assembly proclaimed the critical importance of national action for social development. Thailand is in full accord with this view and has undertaken a concerted effort to realize these goals within our country in order to address such social ills as poverty, drug abuse, disease and hunger, which — despite our considerable success in national economic and social development — continue to bring suffering to people's lives.

In the implementation and monitoring of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit, the Government of Thailand has designated the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board as the focal point. Thailand's eighth five-year national, economic and social development plan, which commenced on 1 October of this year, is consistent with the goals of the Summit and also integrates the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The plan is a people-centred development plan in which economic development is to be regarded as a means and not as an end in national development. Its single objective is human-centred development, and it has adopted the human development index as the means of setting development targets.

The plan aims to empower the Thai people to solve problems by themselves by enabling them to upgrade their capabilities, wisdom and ethics. It also marks the first time in Thai history that people from all professions have been invited to participate in the development planning process.

Towards achieving the three main objectives of the Summit — the eradication of poverty, the enhancement of productive employment and social integration — our eighth national development plan has mapped out three corresponding strategies.

The first strategy is to strengthen the national economy by promoting equitable income distribution and improving the quality of life of the Thai people. This strategy will help eradicate poverty and enhance productive employment. To achieve this first strategy, the Government has implemented an overall economic policy aimed at achieving stability and employment-generation. Rural development and prosperity-decentralization in the region have been expedited by building up economic and social basic services to catalyse sustainable rural development and by expanding the quality and quantity of basic services to meet the local demands of the country. Moreover, the public sector's continued investment in infrastructure and social services has contributed to the rise of income and the improvement of the status and quality of life of the Thai people. It is also important to note that the Government encourages measures to integrate economic development that is environmentally sound.

The second strategy aims to promote social integration and social justice by encouraging popular participation and by upgrading the potential of people of all ages and of both genders. The measures under this strategy include the adjustment of the learning and training processes in order to enable people to think conceptually and work practically; upgrading the potential and capability of the underprivileged to earn more income and rely on themselves, so as to bridge the disparities in income; the encouragement of spiritual development, emphasizing good deeds, self-discipline and ethics; and the development and improvement of the existing social-insurance system to reach various target groups.

This strategy also seeks to strengthen family and community institutions in order to increase their role and participation in the development of the economy, society, culture, environment, politics and administration. It seeks to enhance the role of women to be a driving force in national development and to participate actively in the decision-making process for the sake of integrated and balanced development. It also seeks to create a supportive and favourable environment for youth and juvenile development.

The third strategy is aimed at developing our national administration in the implementation of our national plan. This strategy provides for clearer measures aimed at enhancing the participation of the private sector in national development, building up the capacity of the mass media to advocate national development, creating

common understanding among relevant parties from the top-down to bottom-up planning system, and setting clearer methodologies, under joint programmes, for government-service reforms.

Thailand believes that, by achieving the goals of the eighth national development plan, it will also be able to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Social Development.

Although the *Human Development Report* of 1996 recognizes Thailand as being among those countries which have a high rate of human development, despite modest per capita income, we recognize that we must not become complacent, but must press ever forward. Thailand is firmly committed to fulfilling the noble goals of the World Summit for Development and to taking all necessary measures to develop the potential of our people to the fullest, in order to ensure their full participation in building a society for all.

Among other measures undertaken, perhaps the most important is that we have committed to decreasing the proportion of the poor per total population to less than 10 per cent by the next millennium.

**Mr. Cassar** (Malta): Malta associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the delegation of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

The delegation of Malta welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, contained in document A/51/348 of 18 September 1996.

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995, acknowledges that the principal duty for the attainment of the goals set rests with the national Governments. Also proclaimed is the critical importance of the cooperation, support and contributions of the international community, the United Nations, the multilateral financial institutions, all regional organizations and local authorities, and all actors of civil society — including private citizens — for social development.

By the same resolution, the General Assembly mandated the Commission for Social Development, on which Malta is honoured to serve, with the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the Summit; it also mandated the Economic and Social Council to provide overall guidance and coordination.

My delegation commends the action taken so far by the Commission for Social Development, the Economic and Social Council, other functional committees and the United Nations Secretariat, funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

My Government's programme of action to follow up the World Summit for Social Development is based on a number of principled criteria.

Social justice is guaranteed by giving particular attention to the more vulnerable members of society.

The provision of both social security and social welfare continue and is enhanced. The former ensures material sustenance; the latter is essentially concerned with non-material aspects of support from the community to all persons, particularly those suffering from forms of psychological, cultural or material deprivation.

Social services should aim at a more personal and family-centred focus. While it is the general intention to organize and channel welfare services as much as possible through the family, it is recognized that this has to be done as a function of individual needs and personalities and according to the choice of each member of the family.

Individuals should not become passive recipients of assistance, but ought to be encouraged to participate actively in helping themselves, and eventually others, in safeguarding their well-being. Every person should be able to benefit from and contribute to the spirit of solidarity, the reciprocal concern between all the members of society thus being underlined. Services need not be directly provided by the State, but are often better provided through other agencies. Consequently, government and non-governmental agencies are to complement each other.

These principled criteria which guide my Government are based on a vision that places the human person and the family at the very centre of social development. Following these principled criteria, the Government of Malta has over the past years enacted legislative measures to buttress social security, employment without discrimination, the equal status of women and the provision of equal and universal opportunity and access to free education at all levels, as

well as the whole range of health services and social housing. In the case of employment, special provisions have been made for the disabled, single parents and marginalized or disadvantaged groups, including rehabilitated drug abusers and former prison inmates.

Resources have been made available so that welfare services could operate efficiently. An institute for social work has been established within the University of Malta to provide for the training of social workers in the preventive, rehabilitative and reintegrative social work connected with the family, youth, the elderly, the disabled, abusers of drugs and alcohol and victims of domestic violence.

Malta has also established national commissions with specialized mandates. These include commissions on youth, the elderly, the disabled, the advancement of women and on combating the illicit use of drugs. Civil society is strongly represented on and is considered an essential component of these commissions.

Malta is fortunate to have a strong sense of commitment ingrained in its people and in having an active body of volunteers working under the guidance of several non-governmental organizations. The role of the Catholic Church in this sphere is of particular significance in the development of awareness and the provision of a wide range of services to the community. These non-governmental organizations — many of which are pioneers in social work in Malta — today continue to play a significant role in conjunction with the Government in the provision of psychological, social and material support to those most in need.

These principled criteria and the strategy adopted underline the need to strengthen social justice in ways other than purely financial. They provide and sustain a more caring attitude among citizens, as they reciprocally share problems and benefits. The common good and the well-being of communities at the local or national levels is as dependent on awareness at the personal and social level as it is on commitment and engagement.

Our commitment to ensuring social justice and our promotion and protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are the supporting columns of that bridge which should lead us into the twenty-first century.

**Mr. Mabilangan** (Philippines): I would first like to associate myself with the statement the representative of Costa Rica made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Philippine delegation also commends the Secretary-General for his report on the item under discussion.

Early in the spring of 1995, we were witnesses to a most historic event. One hundred and eighteen Heads of State and Government gathered in Copenhagen to address the problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

The cold war had ended and there was a promise of greater and closer international cooperation to achieve higher living standards and improved social conditions, a process that would hopefully lead to the empowerment of the individual. Unrelenting poverty, especially among debt-strapped countries, widespread and worsening unemployment, a deepening environmental crisis and a growing technological and economic gap between developed and developing countries had focused attention on the plight of the human person. It became increasingly clear that people and their needs were both the reason for and the beneficiaries of development.

Towards this end, the World Summit for Social Development sought to secure international and country-specific commitments and time-bound goals and targets for reducing overall poverty, eradicating absolute poverty, expanding productive employment and enhancing social integration. The special concerns of marginalized and disadvantaged groups were given recognition that went beyond the pale with politics.

The role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in nation-building and in the empowerment of people was recognized, and their participation in the follow-up to the Summit was encouraged.

It is a source of pride and gratification to my Government that during this historic event and its preparatory process, the Philippines had the privilege of serving as Chair of the Group of 77 and China. The Philippines has also been closely involved with the implementation phase of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development in its capacity as Vice-Chair of the Commission for Social Development and as Chair of the working group that worked on the framework for the follow-up process. The Philippines has also been involved in the functioning

of the Commission itself, in the monitoring, review and appraisal of implementation efforts.

Shortly after the Copenhagen Summit, the Philippines began to undertake various measures to implement fully its commitments. Most notably, the Philippine Government created the World Summit for Social Development Multisectoral Committee, in order to coordinate fully its efforts in this regard. It is composed of representatives from government, non-governmental organizations, people's organizations and other concerned groups.

This year, the mandate of this Committee was expanded to cover the recent round of other international human development conferences held at Cairo, Beijing and Istanbul. It was therefore renamed the Multisectoral Committee on International Human Development Commitments. This Committee will serve as a coordinating body that will harmonize all follow-up activities resulting from the international human development conferences.

The efforts of the Philippines to improve the human development goals and aspirations of its people are focused on poverty alleviation, employment expansion and social integration. These concerns are addressed by our Social Reform Agenda through its three-point agenda: access to quality basic services; access to productive resources and asset reforms; and institution-building and participation in governance. The Social Reform Agenda pursues a convergence strategy which emphasizes services to vulnerable sectors of society, such as the small farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous people, workers in the informal sector, the urban poor, disadvantaged women, youth, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and victims of disasters.

At the core of the Social Reform Agenda strategy is the minimum basic needs approach, which aims to meet the survival, security and enabling needs of needy households. On top of this approach, the Social Reform Agenda has adopted basic reform commitments addressing the specific needs of the sectors for greater access to productive assets, for example, post-harvest facilities for farmers.

On employment expansion, the Philippine Government has embarked upon a Comprehensive Employment Strategy Programme, which emphasizes employment-generation, the promotion of labour welfare, and human resource development focused on providing skills for productive employment. To strengthen social integration, the composition of the Social Reform Council was expanded to include representatives from basic organized labour, business and non-governmental organization sectors. Moreover, sectoral representatives were appointed by the Philippine President to the Philippine Congress.

For the elderly, the President signed into law the Senior Citizens Act, which seeks to establish senior citizen centres in every municipality and city, and which provides certain privileges for low-income elderly persons. Likewise passed into law was the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, which provides for rehabilitation, self-development and self-reliance for persons with disabilities and for their integration into the mainstream of society. On the issue of youth, the National Youth Commission was created to coordinate youth programmes in the country.

We wish to state that the Philippines is well on its way towards implementing its commitments with respect to the 20/20 initiative. This is indicated by the encouraging increase in the percentage of national Government resources and official development assistance mobilized for priority social programmes over the past few years. At the domestic level, local government units are being encouraged to increase spending on human development priorities. Such local efforts are needed to complement resource mobilization at the national level. In this connection, we were glad to hear from the representative of Norway of the successful outcome of the Oslo consensus on the 20/20 initiative.

At this point, we wish to state that there is a need to emphasize efforts at the international level for mobilizing resources to implement fully the commitments reached at Copenhagen. It is our earnest hope that the momentum reached at the World Summit for Social Development will be sustained in the years to come. In Copenhagen, we achieved a common acceptance of human equality and human dignity as the framework upon which to build a future where each person will be vested with the right to the enjoyment of basic human needs, as well as the opportunity and capacity to develop his or her potential to the fullest. Now, the bigger task of realizing this is at hand.

While some decisions have been made with regard to the mechanisms for the implementation of Copenhagen, as was done during the special session of the Commission for Social Development, one has yet to see a concrete proposal on resources: the necessary wherewithal to implement the Programme of Action.

As we draw closer to the end of the millennium, when we shall meet again in this very Hall to take stock of what we have accomplished or have failed to accomplish in the interim, we shall need more than promises in order that we shall not be found wanting.

**Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan** (Vietnam): Let me first express a note of high appreciation for the exemplary way Ambassador Razali has been presiding over the work of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. This demonstrates a deep sense of responsibility and also constitutes a substantial contribution, in practical terms, to the Organization at this difficult time.

It has been over a year and a half since our leaders met at Copenhagen to highlight the significance of social development for human well-being. Together, they solemnly made a universal commitment to social development with a far-reaching vision.

At this session we are to look back and take stock of the developments and progress made so far and devise the next steps to implement further and follow up the Copenhagen commitments. We note with satisfaction that the question of social development has since then been generally accorded a higher priority on both the international and the national agendas. Efforts have been made to tackle issues embodied in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action — such as poverty eradication, productive employment and social integration — as essential to economic and social development for every country and for the world as a whole.

On the basis of Copenhagen and as suited to their specific conditions, countries have initiated their national programmes of action and achieved initial results. The United Nations, its specialized agencies and international financial institutions have contributed their part in the implementation of activities and programmes at the national, regional and international levels. The Commission for Social Development has also carried out meaningful work this year in this regard.

My delegation highly appreciates the comprehensive analysis presented by the representative of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on the question of social development.

In reviewing the 18-month follow-up of the Copenhagen Summit, I shall focus on two concrete issues which, in the view of my delegation, are of the utmost importance, especially to the people of developing countries who make up the majority of the world's population. Those issues are an enabling international environment and the alleviation of poverty and hunger.

In today's world of ever-increasing interdependence, international support and multilateral cooperation have not only been helpful; they have been indispensable. Given the numerous global challenges to our survival that must be met, they are particularly indispensable for the countries of both the North and the South. For social development we need peace and we need efforts and actions at both national and international levels. However, there are still conflicts that divert the energy and resources needed for development, and they must be resolved. There are still constraints and unavoidable extraneous conditions that hamper our common efforts and restrict our cooperation for the betterment of mankind in each and every country. In addition, the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance is ever farther out of reach. The past two years have witnessed a trend towards continued reduction in the provision of development aid. The greatest sufferers from this situation are the developing countries.

As was recognized at Copenhagen, social development is an integral part of and the result of many related issues and must be pursued as a component of an overall development strategy. In addition, the human person has been placed at the centre of development. Yet hunger and poverty remain an acute problem in our world. More than one fifth of the world's population is now living in conditions of absolute poverty, lacking the most essential means necessary for daily survival — food, clean water and sanitation. Many developing countries must overcome this critical situation of poverty and hunger before they can enjoy the fruits of social development. In this respect, we express our hope that the outcome of the World Conference on Food Security will help in the alleviation of hunger and poverty, especially for those in the most difficulty.

In the light of the above situation, we, together with other delegations, call for a renewed and greater commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation based on genuine partnership and mutual benefit. More resources need to be mobilized to support the countries of the South in their efforts to overcome difficulties. In this context, the United Nations needs to play a more active role. We therefore urge that the Agenda for Development now under consideration be

adopted as soon as possible. That will be beneficial to our common cause of social development.

Since Copenhagen, Viet Nam has made great efforts to implement the Summit's Declaration and Programme of Action. In line with our commitments at Copenhagen, a national programme of action has been developed. Priorities have been set and measures to allocate energy and resources to achieve them have been adopted and carried out. These strategies have been included as an integral part of the country's overall renewed policy for economic and social development towards the goal of building a Viet Nam with a prosperous people, a strong country and a just and civilized society. We have achieved significant results in many fields, providing the people with better living conditions.

In the pursuit of social development in Viet Nam, as in many other developing countries, the alleviation of poverty and hunger remains a critical problem. This issue is high on our national agenda. We recognize that economic growth is important but that it is not the sole factor in eradicating hunger and poverty. Hunger and poverty have multiple causes that must be dealt with in the broader context of economic and social development as a first and necessary step.

Thus, a nation-wide programme for hunger eradication and poverty alleviation has been launched, and we have responded actively to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, 1996. I would like to share some of our experiences in this connection.

The main focus of the programme for hunger eradication and poverty alleviation is the creation of opportunities for the poor to increase their incomes and improve their standards of living, and not merely a means of social relief. It is a comprehensive programme that ranges from helping the poor with capital for income generation to policies for education, training, health care, infrastructure building and so on. Almost all provinces and cities have established and implemented programmes for hunger and poverty alleviation. Resources and funds have been mobilized through a joint venture between the State, local government and the people.

A Bank for the Poor, with an initial capital equivalent to $45 million, has been established to make credit funds accessible to poor households and to help them in their productive activities. The Bank is a non-profit institution that provides the poor with direct preferential credit, and it has branches in all the country's 53 provinces and cities.

We have also developed various cooperation programmes for hunger and poverty alleviation with assistance from other Governments, from such international organizations as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and from non-governmental organizations. In May 1996, the Government of Viet Nam, in coordination with UNDP, organized an international workshop on this subject. We also participated in the Indo-China conference on hunger and poverty held at Bangkok from 22 to 24 July 1996.

We support the proposal that this item be considered at the General Assembly's session each year until the year 2000, when a special session will be held for an overall review, assessment and appraisal of the programmes and activities undertaken to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. That will provide us with opportunities to exchange experiences and work together to advance faster towards the fulfilment of the commitments we entered into at the World Summit for Social Development.

**Mr. Yelchenko** (Ukraine): More than a year has passed since the World Summit for Social Development, a forum that determined the strategy for future world social development. The Copenhagen Programme of Action is a rich source of ideas and practical recommendations that can be helpful for national strategies and programmes aimed at achieving specific goals in the field of social development, taking due account of national conditions, traditions and priorities.

In our view, the spirit of the agreements reached at the Summit reflects the sense of solidarity within and among nations and their intention to curb the acute social problems being faced by many countries. Once considered an exclusive responsibility of national Governments, such problems are now of a global scale and hence require global attention.

Although the global conferences held earlier in this decade drew the attention of the world community in various ways to the problems of social development, we agree with speakers who have concluded that the social Summit at Copenhagen absorbed all the trends in world social development and dealt with all societies, highlighting the interdependence and the universality of our world.

All countries, irrespective of their geographical location, experience the need for social development and integration. This is also true for Ukraine and other newly independent States, for which the transition from one socio-economic system to another, and from a totalitarian system of government to real democracy, has turned out to be a more complex and protracted challenge than was imagined at the outset. The implementation of comprehensive, radical political reforms and the introduction of a socially oriented market economy are the two key elements on which Ukraine is focusing its new economic strategy in present-day conditions.

Ukraine's participation in the World Summit for Social Development at the presidential level was of special importance for us, and that is why the Government is taking specific social measures to apply the Summit's recommendations in its domestic policies.

In a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General in March of this year, the President of Ukraine outlined the measures undertaken at the national level in following up the World Summit for Social Development. One of the major practical steps was the recent approval of the main direction of the activities of the State executive power of Ukraine in the implementation of the final documents of the World Summit for Social Development.

Taking into account the proclamation by the United Nations of the year 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, Ukraine has also elaborated a specific national plan of activities for the Year, which is currently under way.

As a new member of the Council of Europe, Ukraine is making every effort to meet the exceptional demands of this authoritative body in social and economic matters, in particular with regard to social policy, social security, employment, demography and migration.

Yesterday, at the 35th plenary meeting, our delegation informed the General Assembly about some of the measures that the Government of Ukraine is undertaking to create favourable conditions for the general development of children. A number of other programmes in the social field are also being launched, among them the long-term programme on the advancement of women and the family, the programme for the protection of maternity and children, the education programme, the national family-planning programme, the integrated programme on the problems of the disabled and others.

It is the view of our delegation, that the report of the United Nations Secretary-General (A/51/348) gives an exhaustive picture of the work done in implementing the Copenhagen Programme of Action endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/161. We note with satisfaction the efforts undertaken to establish a reliable mechanism to ensure the Summit follow-up. The delegation of Ukraine considers that this mechanism creates a reliable basis for coordinating United Nations activities in the implementation of the decisions of the Copenhagen Summit. A series of international conferences and meetings for social progress, held in France, Norway and Chile, and the preparation of a series of seminars to be held in Denmark will also serve that end. The initiative of Austria to convene a European regional meeting in 1997 to review the progress made towards fulfilling the commitments entered into at the Summit has our full support.

In this connection, our delegation takes note of the results of the special session of the Commission for Social Development held in May of this year, which adopted a multi-year programme of work within the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action and came up with recommendations on the coordination of the activities within the United Nations system for the eradication of poverty.

We believe that adoption of agreed conclusions 1996/1 on the role of the United Nations in the overall effort for the eradication of poverty and in assisting Member States to translate the global goals and commitments of international conferences and the statutory mandates of each organization into concrete actions and activities at all levels should promote coordination and strengthen the role of the Organization.

In general, we consider that a year after the World Summit we have the necessary mechanisms that can help us to implement the decisions of that important forum. We therefore hope that the special session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000 will review our five-year joint efforts with a special view to evaluating the capability of the Organization to solve the global social problems facing the international community.

**Mr. Mapuranga** (Zimbabwe): I have the honour to address the Assembly on agenda item 45, "Implementation of the World Summit for Social Development", on behalf of the States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius,

Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and my own country, Zimbabwe. We would like first of all to endorse the statement made by Costa Rica as Chairman of the Group of 77.

I should like to express my region's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his informative report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/51/348). We have found the report useful in providing us with an indication of what the United Nations is doing with regard to follow-up activities.

With the decline of conflicts within our region, the SADC member States are now beginning to concentrate seriously on economic and social-development issues. With regard to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the member States have set up focal points that will be responsible for the national follow-up of the Summit goals.

At the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen our Heads of State and Government committed themselves to the goal of eradicating poverty, expanding productive sectors, creating employment, and creating a favourable and enabling environment for world economic recovery and growth through decisive international and national action. That commitment was the result of the realization that social development was an ethical, political and economic imperative for humankind. The Summit reaffirmed rights relating to education, food, shelter and employment. The Summit also identified the goals of the promotion of full employment and social integration. The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen provided the international community with a pragmatic and viable framework for advancing the social development and well-being of all peoples, as enunciated in the United Nations Charter.

Notwithstanding the international commitment to rid the world of those social ills, we have yet to see a concrete financial commitment to change rhetoric into the realization of set targets. The socio-economic gains that have been made in recent years have yet to have a significant impact on the daily lives of men, women and children. Over one billion people live in absolute poverty, and 67,000 join the ranks of the poor each day. We see poverty eradication as being at the very core of the implementation of the outcome of the social Summit; this was aptly summed up by President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania in his address to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. He said:

> "Unless the issue of poverty is addressed comprehensively, we cannot achieve meaningful and enduring peace." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-First Session, Plenary Meetings, 22nd meeting, p. 2)*

Poverty is a denial of human rights, and we cannot have full democracy amidst absolute poverty and social injustice.

In this context, we believe that the Copenhagen Programme of Action reflects the determination of the international community to address the problem of social injustice and its attendant ills. The full implementation of the outcome of the world social Summit requires the cooperation of developed and developing countries. There must be the requisite political will to ensure that the Copenhagen document is not relegated to the shelves of the archives. The momentum generated by the world social Summit must not be allowed to dissipate into nothingness.

While we agree with the view that the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action is primarily the responsibility of each national Government, it is undeniable that developing countries, especially those in Africa, are encountering insurmountable difficulties in reallocating already overstretched budgets to finance follow-up activities. The increasing disparities and instability that characterize the international economic system offer bleak development prospects to most African countries, making it difficult to marshal the necessary resources for social development. We continue to struggle with the overwhelming problems of ponderous debt burdens, trade barriers and other forms of protectionism, low commodity prices and onerous structural adjustment programmes. National social integration programmes cannot be sustained without international solidarity. Social disintegration is a threat to peace both within and between nations. Social development should therefore be on a global scale. There is an urgent need for international cooperation in strengthening the institutional capacity of developing countries to implement the Summit goals.

The implementation of the 20/20 compact would go a long way towards achieving the goals of the world social Summit. The SADC subregion, my subregion, has embraced the 20/20 compact, convinced as it is that it is vital for the provision of social safety nets in the quest for social development. We realize that the 20/20 compact was agreed upon on a voluntary basis, but we

feel that the global implementation of the compact would enable developing countries to integrate the socially excluded groups.

While we acknowledge with appreciation that some developed countries have attained the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for overall official development assistance, we note with great concern that the target has not been reached by many of our developed partners and that in fact the level is regrettably on the decline. We call on our development partners to honour the commitment they made at Copenhagen.

With regard to trade, it has been recognized that the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements will have an initial negative impact on developing countries, especially the net food importers. In this context, measures should be taken to mitigate those negative effects, in particular the loss of markets and competitiveness. At Copenhagen, we agreed to ensure the establishment of an enabling economic environment and that an exercise to offset the negative consequences of the Uruguay Round agreements would be an essential part of the setting up of that environment.

The debt crisis is a major obstacle, not only to economic growth but also to the provision of essential social services in most countries in our region. We agreed at Copenhagen that the objective was indeed to reduce debt to sustainable levels. In fact, we believe that there has to be a serious effort at debt cancellation for Africa, the continent with largest number of least developed countries. That initiative has to entail the participation and commitment of international financial institutions, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, the Paris Club and other multilateral creditors. We welcome the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and hope that it will give a fillip to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and deal comprehensively with the problem of African development.

The United Nations should play a greater role in promoting the effective implementation of the Summit's Programme of Action. We acknowledge that the United Nations system has undertaken some important initial steps to facilitate the implementation of the Summit goals. We welcome the setting up of the inter-agency task forces, which are meant to assist Governments and national institutions in implementing Summit commitments. The recent establishment of an Inter-Agency Committee on Women with the responsibility of addressing, on a system-wide basis, all aspects of the Beijing Conference, is a far-sighted development on the part of the United Nations system, and we welcome it.

I wish to conclude my remarks by noting that although various types of machinery have been put in place, there is no mention of the necessary resources to start the process going. There should be a coordinated effort to mobilize financial resources if we are to move from sheer rhetoric to implementation.

**Programme of work**

*The President took the Chair.*

**The President**: Tomorrow morning, as already announced, remaining speakers in the debate on agenda item 98 will be heard first.

Tomorrow morning, the Assembly will also take up three reports of the Fifth Committee: on agenda item 126, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara"; on agenda item 133, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia"; and on agenda item 135, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia".

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*